Resolved-Sideband Raman Cooling of a Bound Atom to the 3-D Zero-Point Energy

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ABSTRACT

We report laser-cooling of a single ⁹Be⁺ ion held in a rf (Paul) ion trap to where it occupies the quantum-mechanical ground state of motion. With the use of resolved-sideband stimulated-Raman cooling, the zero-point of motion is achieved 98% of the time in 1-D and 92% of the time in 3-D. Cooling to the zero-point energy appears to be a crucial prerequisite for future experiments such as the realization of simple quantum logic gates applicable to quantum computation.

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Dramatic progress in the field of atomic laser-cooling has provided cooling of free or weakly-bound atoms to temperatures near the Doppler cooling limit [1], near the photon recoil limit [2], and more recently below the photon recoil limit [3],[4]. For a tightly bound atom, a more natural energy scale is given by the quantized vibrational level n, where the energy is $E = \hbar \omega_v (n+\frac{1}{2})$ for an atom confined in a harmonic potential of frequency ω_v . In this case, the fundamental cooling limit is the n=0 zero-point energy of the binding potential. In this letter, we demonstrate a new technique for laser-cooling a trapped atom to the three-dimensional zero-point energy.

Attainment of the 3-D ground state is significant for two primary reasons: (i) it appears to be a goal of intrinsic interest as it is the fundamental limit of cooling for a bound atom and approaches the ideal of an isolated particle at rest; and (ii) it will be important in future planned experiments. For example, once the ion is cooled to the n=0 state, it should be possible to realize the Jaynes-Cummings interaction [5] in the regime of strong coupling and generate other nonclassical states of motion such as squeezed states [6],[7],[8]. If the collective motion of two or more trapped ions can be cooled to the zero-point, it may be possible to transfer correlation from the external motional state to the internal spin state of the ions. Generating "EPR"-like atomic spin states would not only be interesting from the point of view of quantum measurements [9], but may also allow a reduction of quantum noise in spectroscopy [6,7]. Zero-point cooling combined with long coherence times may make it possible to construct a quantum computer [10]. Cirac and Zoller have proposed a quantum computer based on a system of trapped ions, in which information is stored in the spin and motional states of the ions [11]. The fundamental switching action in this implementation of a quantum computer is a coherent exchange between the spin state of an individual ion and a collective vibrational state of the all the ions. Cooling to the zero-point energy and realizing the Jaynes-Cummings coupling is critical to this scheme.

We cool a single beryllium ion bound in a rf (Paul) ion trap to near the zero-point energy using resolved-sideband laser-cooling with stimulated-Raman transitions along the lines suggested in Ref. [6]. The idea of resolved-sideband laser-cooling with a single-photon transition is as follows [12]. Consider a two-level atom characterized by resonant transition frequency ω_0 and radiative linewidth γ . We assume the atom is confined by a 1-D harmonic well of vibration frequency $\omega_v \gg \gamma$. If a laser beam (frequency ω_L) is incident along the direction of the atomic motion, the absorption

spectrum is composed of a "carrier" at frequency ω_0 and resolved frequency-modulation sidebands spaced by ω_v which are generated from the Doppler effect. Cooling occurs if the laser is tuned to a lower sideband, for example at $\omega_L = \omega_0 - \omega_v$. In this case, photons of energy $\hbar(\omega_0 - \omega_v)$ are absorbed and spontaneously emitted photons of average energy $\hbar\omega_0$ return the atom to its initial internal state thereby reducing the atom's kinetic energy by $\hbar\omega_v$ per scattering event (assuming $\hbar\omega_v$ is much greater than the photon recoil energy). Cooling proceeds until the atom's mean vibrational quantum number in the harmonic well is given by $\langle n \rangle_{min} \simeq (\gamma/2\omega_v)^2 \ll 1$ [1,[13]. The interaction with the laser is significantly reduced once in the n=0 state; thus the zero-point state satisfies the *operational definition* of a dark state [14] for γ/ω_v sufficiently small. Resolved-sideband cooling in 2-D was previously achieved on a ¹⁹⁸Hg⁺ ion using a narrow single-photon optical quadrupole transition [15].

For laser-cooling with stimulated-Raman transitions [4,6,[16],[17], the single-photon transition is replaced by a stimulated-Raman transition between metastable levels (e.g., hyperfine or Zeeman electronic ground states), and spontaneous Raman transitions irreversibly recycle the internal state of the atom. Stimulated-Raman cooling offers the important practical advantages that the cooling linewidth can be varied experimentally, and the effective laser linewidth can be made very narrow by use of optical frequency modulators. These features of stimulated-Raman cooling have already been used to achieve very low temperatures for free or weakly bound neutral atoms in the unresolved-sideband limit [4]. Since narrow single-photon transitions are not required, the resolved-sideband Raman cooling technique described here can be generalized to many ion species, and may also be applied to strongly-bound neutral atoms held in dipole traps [18] and optical lattices [19].

The experiment is conducted as follows. We first achieve $\langle n_v \rangle \approx 1$ in 3-D (v=x,y,z) by performing Doppler cooling on an allowed electric dipole transition (γ large) and making the trap strong enough that $\omega_v \approx \gamma$. This Doppler "precooling" places the ion into the Lamb-Dicke regime ($\Delta x \ll \lambda/2\pi$, where Δx is the rms spread of the ion position and λ is the wavelength of the dipole transition). We reduce $\langle n_v \rangle$ further in 3-D by employing a second stage of cooling on narrower Raman transitions between hyperfine ground states ($\gamma_{Ram} \ll \omega_v$). Finally, we extract $\langle n_v \rangle$ by measuring the asymmetry of the resolved motional sidebands in the Raman absorption spectrum [15].

A single $^9Be^+$ ion is stored in a coaxial-resonator-based rf (Paul) ion trap ($r_0 \simeq 170~\mu m$, $z_0 \simeq 130~\mu m$) described in Ref. [20]. A potential $V_0 cos(\Omega_0 t)$ is applied to the ring ($V_0 \simeq 600~V$,

 $\Omega_0/2\pi \approx 231$ MHz), yielding ${}^9\mathrm{Be^+}$ pseudopotential oscillation frequencies of $(\omega_x, \omega_y, \omega_z)/2\pi \approx (11.2, 18.2, 29.8)$ MHz along the principal axes of the trap [21]. Once a ${}^9\mathrm{Be^+}$ ion is loaded in the trap, its lifetime is about 6 hours (background pressure $< 10^{-8}$ Pa).

The geometry and polarizations of the various laser beams as well as the relevant energy levels in ⁹Be⁺ are summarized in Fig. 1. The quantization axis is defined by an applied magnetic field $|\mathbf{B}| \approx 0.18$ mT. Laser radiation (beam D2, σ^+ -polarized) detuned slightly to the red of the 2 S_{1/2}(F=2) \rightarrow 2 P_{3/2} transitions ($\lambda \approx 313$ nm, $\gamma/2\pi \approx 19.4$ MHz, 3 P_{3/2} hyperfine structure ≈ 1 MHz) is directed at oblique angles to all the principal axes of the trap, providing Doppler precooling in all trap dimensions. A second 313 nm source (beam D1, σ^+ -polarized) tuned to the ${}^2S_{1/2}(F=1) \rightarrow {}^2P_{3/2}$ transition prevents optical pumping to the F=1 ground state. A pair of Raman beams is also directed into the trap (beams R1 and R2) to drive a much narrower transition between the ${}^2S_{1/2}$ $|F=2\rangle$ and $|F=1\rangle$ hyperfine ground states of ${}^{9}Be^{+}$ through the virtual ${}^{2}P_{1/2}$ state. The Raman beams are detuned \approx 12 GHz to the red of the $^2S_{1/2} \rightarrow ^2P_{1/2}$ transition with a difference frequency very near the $^2S_{1/2}$ hyperfine splitting of $\omega_0/2\pi \simeq 1.250$ GHz. A third 313 nm source (beam D3, σ^+ -polarized) is tuned to the ${}^2S_{1/2}(F=2) \rightarrow {}^2P_{1/2}(F=2)$ transition and depletes the $|F,m_F\rangle = |2,1\rangle$ ground state. Beams D1, D2, and D3 are derived from two frequency-doubled dye lasers, producing 5-10 µW of power in each beam, enough to saturate the ion near resonance. Beams R1 and R2 are derived from a third frequency-doubled dye laser, providing a few mW of power in each beam. The difference frequency of the Raman beams is tunable over the range 1200-1300 MHz with the use of a double-pass acoustooptic modulator (AOM). The counterpropagating Raman beams are also at oblique angles to the trap's principal axes and are therefore sensitive to motion in all dimensions. All beams are shuttered with AOMs. The 313 nm fluorescence from the trapped ion is imaged through f/2 optics onto a position-sensitive photomultiplier tube, resulting in a photon count rate as high as ~10 kHz (quantum efficiency $\approx 2 \times 10^{-4}$). The background count rate is ≈ 100 Hz.

Doppler precooling, Raman cooling, and measurement of the Raman absorption spectrum are accomplished by following the sequence outlined in Table I. After precooling (beams D1, D2, and D3), the ion is prepared in the ${}^2S_{1/2}|2,2\rangle$ electronic ground state by turning off beam D2. The relative tuning of the Raman beams is set to a first lower (red) sideband near ω_0 - ω_v , driving a stimulated-Raman transition from the $|2,2\rangle|n_v\rangle$ state to the $|1,1\rangle|n_v-1\rangle$ state. The ion is then recycled with

nearly-resonant beams D1 and D3, inducing spontaneous Raman transitions predominantly to the $|2,2\rangle|n_v$ -1 \rangle state. This cycling of stimulated and spontaneous Raman transitions (steps 3 and 4 of Table I) is repeated as desired on any or all of the three dimensions. The relative tuning of the Raman beams is then set near $\omega_0 + \delta_{pr}$, and a stimulated-Raman "probe" transition is driven between the states, where Δn_v =0,±1. The probability of driving the probe transition is then measured by driving an stimulated-Raman "exchange π -pulse" from $|2,2\rangle|n_v\rangle \rightarrow |1,1\rangle|n_v\rangle$, followed by driving the cycling ${}^2S_{1/2}|2,2\rangle \rightarrow {}^2P_{3/2}|3,3\rangle$ transition with beam D2 and gating and collecting the fluorescence. (The "exchange π -pulse" in step 6 of the table reduces the fluorescence noise when $\langle n_v\rangle \approx 0$.) The ion scatters thousands of photons on the cycling transition before decaying into the $|1,1\rangle$ electronic state due to imperfect circular polarization of beam D2, resulting in a net quantum efficiency near 1. As this sequence is repeated at ≈ 4 kHz, δ_{pr} is slowly swept, yielding the Raman absorption spectrum.

The Raman "carrier" represents the transition $|2,2\rangle|n_v\rangle - |1,1\rangle|n_v\rangle$ and occurs at $\delta_{pr} \equiv 0$ (compensating for stable Zeeman and AC Stark shifts of ≈ 2 MHz). In the Lamb-Dicke regime, the carrier feature has strength $I_c = \sin^2(\Omega\tau_{pr})$, where $\Omega = g_1g_2/\Delta$ is the carrier Rabi flopping frequency, τ_{pr} is the exposure time of the atom to the probe Raman beams, g_1 and g_2 are the resonant Rabi frequencies of Raman beams R1 and R2, and Δ is the detuning of the Raman beams from the excited state (we assume $\Delta \gg \gamma, g_1, g_2$) [6]. In each dimension, blue and red sidebands occurring at $\delta_{pr} = \pm \omega_v$ represent the transitions $|2,2\rangle|n_v\rangle - |1,1\rangle|n_v\pm 1\rangle$. The strengths of the blue and red sidebands in the Lamb-Dicke regime are given by $I_v^{\text{blue}} = \langle \sin^2[\Omega\tau_{pr}\eta_v(n_v+1)^{\nu_2}] \rangle$ and $I_v^{\text{red}} = \langle \sin^2[\Omega\tau_{pr}\eta_v\eta_v^{\nu_2}] \rangle$, where the average is performed over the distribution of n_v . The Lamb-Dicke parameters are given by $\eta_v = \delta k_v r_v = (0.21, 0.12, 0.09)$, where $\delta k_v = 2k_v$ is the component of the difference in the counterpropagating Raman beam wavevectors in the vth dimension, and $r_v = (\hbar/2m\omega_v)^{\nu_2}$ is the spread of the $n_v=0$ wavefunction. The sideband Rabi flopping frequencies $\Omega\eta_v$ are typically a few hundred kilohertz, thus the absorption features are well-resolved and spontaneous emission during all stimulated-Raman processes is negligible.

A Raman absorption spectrum of the first blue and red sidebands of the x direction $(\delta_{pr} = \pm \omega_x)$ is shown in Fig. 2 (solid points) for Doppler precooling only (omitting steps 3 and 4 in Table I). Similar features appear at $\delta_{pr} = \pm \omega_y$ and $\pm \omega_z$. If n_v is thermally distributed, then it is straightforward to show that $I^{red}_{\nu}/I^{blue}_{\nu} = \langle n_v \rangle/(1+\langle n_v \rangle)$, independent of $\Omega \tau_{pr} \eta_v$. By recording several spectra varying

 τ_{pr} , we find the ratio of red to blue sideband strength remains approximately constant, indicating a nearly thermal distribution of n_v . (We ensure that Ω is the same on the blue and red sidebands.) We measure $\langle n_v \rangle$ for a variety of red detunings of Doppler precooling beams D1 and D2, and obtain values as low as $\langle n_v \rangle \simeq (0.47, 0.30, 0.18)$ in the three dimensions at a detuning of about -30 MHz (we estimate $\simeq 10\%$ uncertainties in the measurements). At other detunings, we measure values as high as $\langle n_v \rangle \simeq 7$. These values and their behavior with detuning are consistent with the theoretical limit of Doppler cooling [17].

Figure 2 includes a Raman absorption spectrum following additional sideband Raman cooling (hollow points). Five Raman cooling cycles in the x dimension are employed (steps 3 and 4 of Table I with $\omega_v = \omega_x$). The exposure time τ_{Ram} of the last Raman pulse is set so that $\Omega \tau_{Ram} \eta_x \simeq \pi/2$ or $\tau_{Ram} \simeq 2.5 \ \mu s$, corresponding to nearly a π -pulse from the n_x =1 state to the n_x =0 state. The durations of the earlier pulses are set shorter to optimize the cooling. The recycle time between each stimulated-Raman transition is about 7 µs, ample time for the ion to scatter the expected average of \approx 3 photons from beams D1 and D3 and ultimately get recycled to the $|2,2\rangle$ state. The suppression of the red sideband (and growth of the blue sideband) indicates the extent of the additional cooling, from $\langle n_x \rangle \simeq 0.47$ to $\langle n_x \rangle \simeq 0.014(10)$ (the $n_x=0$ state is occupied $\simeq 98\%$ of the time). We observe no further cooling by increasing the number of Raman cooling cycles beyond about five, and see little sensitivity to the details of the Raman cooling pulse durations. As discussed above, we verify that the distribution of n_v is nearly thermal after Raman cooling. We achieve resolved-sideband Raman cooling in 3-D by sequentially driving on all three red sidebands. Five cycles of cooling are applied to each dimension (order: xyzxyz...) by alternating the tuning of the Raman cooling beams between the three red sidebands. From the measured asymmetry of each pair of sidebands, we infer 3-D Raman cooling to $\langle n_v \rangle \simeq (0.033, 0.022, 0.029)$, or the $n_x = n_v = n_z = 0$ three-dimensional ground state being occupied ~92% of the time.

The limit of Raman cooling is determined by heating from off-resonant stimulated-Raman transitions (expected to result in a limit of $\langle n_x \rangle_{StRam} \simeq (g_1g_2)^2/(\omega_v\Delta)^2 \simeq 10^{-3}$) and heating from off-resonant spontaneous emission from the Raman beams (a limit of $\langle n_x \rangle_{SpRam} \simeq (g_1g_2/\Delta^2)\eta_x\gamma\tau_{Ram} \simeq 10^{-3}$). We believe the minimum measured value of $\langle n_x \rangle \simeq 0.02$ may be due to anomalous heating of the ion, which we measure to be $\partial \langle n \rangle/\partial t \simeq +1/msec$ by inserting various amounts of time between cooling and

probing. We are currently investigating the source of this heating.

In summary, we present cooling of a single trapped ${}^9Be^+$ ion to the zero-point energy using the technique of resolved-sideband stimulated-Raman cooling. The ion is cooled in 1-D so that the $n_x=0$ state is occupied $\approx 98\%$ of the time, and in 3-D so that the $n_x=n_y=n_z=0$ state is occupied $\approx 92\%$ of the time. By driving stimulated-Raman transitions between hyperfine states of the ion, we realize a Jaynes-Cummings coupling between the internal spin state and the external vibrational state of the ion. This is exploited here for zero-point cooling, but can also be used for the possible preparation of correlated spin states of two or more trapped ions [7], and for the demonstration of quantum logic gates applicable to quantum computation [11].

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- [21] The drive frequency $\Omega_0 \simeq 231$ MHz is much larger than the pseudopotential vibration frequencies ω_v , so the contribution of the driven "micromotion" at Ω_0 to the overall amplitude of the ion motion is very small. This includes the micromotion induced from static background fields, which are minimized with compensation electrodes (see Ref. [20]). Moreover, the small FM micromotion sidebands at $\pm\Omega_0$ are well resolved ($\Omega_0 \gg \gamma$) and far from the region of interest in the absorption spectrum. Thus the trap can be accurately approximated as a simple harmonic oscillator with frequencies ω_v .

TABLE I. Timing sequence for Doppler precooling, resolved-sideband stimulated-Raman cooling, and Raman detection of $\langle n_v \rangle$. As sequence is repeated through steps 1-7, δ_{pr} is slowly swept across absorption features. Raman cooling steps (3 and 4) are repeated as desired within the sequence.

step	duration (µs)	beams D1,D3	beam D2	beams R1,R2	Raman tuning	function
1	≈ 5 0	on	on	off	_	Doppler precool
2	≃ 7	on	off	off	-	prepare in $ 2,2\rangle$ state
3	1-3	off	off	on	ω_0 - ω_v	stimulated-Raman transition $ 2,2\rangle n_v\rangle \rightarrow 1,1\rangle n_v-1\rangle$
4	~ 7	on	off	off	-	spontaneous Raman recycle $ 1,1\rangle n_v-1\rangle \rightarrow 2,2\rangle n_v-1\rangle$
5	1-3	off	off	on	$\omega_0 + \delta_{\rm pr}$	probe $\langle n_v \rangle$ with stim. Raman transitions $ 2,2\rangle n_v\rangle \rightarrow 1,1\rangle n_v\rangle$
6	~ 1	off	off	on	ω_0	exchange π -pulse: $ 2,2\rangle n_{\rm v}\rangle + 1,1\rangle n_{\rm v}\rangle$
7	~ 200	off	on	off	-	detect transition in step 5: cycle on $ 2,2\rangle - 3,3\rangle$; collect fluor.

FIGURE CAPTIONS

FIG. 1. (a) Laser beam geometry. The trap ring electrode (in the x-y plane) is shown rotated 45° into the page (the endcap electrodes along the z-axis are not shown; see Ref. [20]). A magnetic field **B** defines a quantization axis along $\Re/\sqrt{2} + \Re/2 + \Re/2$, and laser beam polarizations are indicated. Fluorescence light is collected along the direction perpendicular to the page. (b) Relevant ${}^9\text{Be}^+$ energy levels (not to scale), indicated by $F_{,m_F}$ quantum numbers in the ${}^2S_{1/2}$ ground state (2P finestructure splitting is ≈ 197 GHz, ${}^2S_{1/2}$ hyperfine splitting is $\omega_0/2\pi \approx 1.250$ GHz, and the ${}^2P_{3/2}$ hyperfine and Zeeman structure is not resolved). All optical transitions are near $\lambda \approx 313$ nm. D1 and D2: Doppler precooling and detection beams; D3: $|2,1\rangle$ depletion beam; R1 and R2: Raman beams. The detuning of R1 and R2 from the ${}^2S_{1/2} \rightarrow {}^2P_{1/2}$ transition is $\Delta/2\pi \approx 12$ GHz.

FIG. 2. Raman absorption spectrum of a single ${}^9Be^+$ ion after Doppler precooling (solid points) and after 5 cycles of additional resolved-sideband stimulated-Raman cooling on the x dimension (hollow points). The observed count rate is normalized to the probability $P\{|2,2\rangle\}$ of the ion being in the $|2,2\rangle$ state. The first blue and red sidebands of the x dimension are shown at $\delta_{pr}/2\pi \approx \pm 11.2$ MHz. Similar sidebands are found near ± 18.2 MHz (y dimension) and at ± 29.8 MHz (z dimension). For precooling, the asymmetry in the sidebands indicates a thermal average vibrational occupation number of $\langle n_x \rangle \approx 0.47(5)$. For Raman cooling, the reduction of the red sideband and growth of the blue sideband implies further Raman cooling in the x-dimension to $\langle n_x \rangle \approx 0.014(10)$. The widths of the features are consistent with the 2.5 μ s Raman probe time. Each point represents an average of 400 measurements, corresponding to ≈ 5 minutes of integration time for the entire data set. The lines connect the data points.

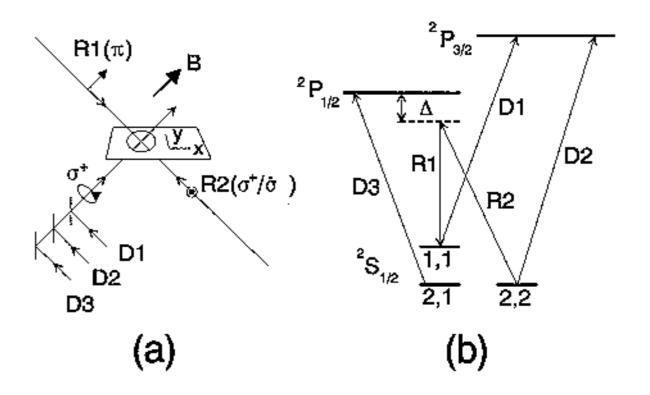


Fig. 1.

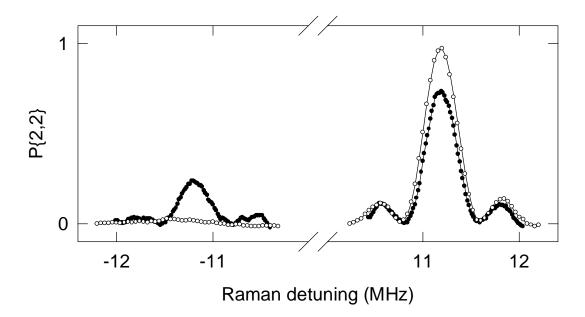


Fig. 2.